

To readers of *The Ground of Faith*:

If you go to www.snipurl.com/sxs6 you will find much general information about how the author by a series of strange coincidences found himself talking with the spirit of St Stephen, who only three months before, had without warning begun speaking through an entranced Thomas Ashman, an agnostic Jew, who had not previously acted as a medium. The following document introduces Stephen, Thomas Ashman, and present the strong linguistic and historical evidence that it is actual St Stephen with whom we have to deal; that the Holy Spirit is truly at work here.

The 200 conversations with Stephen over a period of seven years were a profound and life-changing experience, presenting a view of basic Christianity helpful for those mature in the faith.

[This document is an adaptation of Parts Two and Six in The Stephen Experience.]

Part Two: Stephen speaks about his Earthly life; sets a puzzle; solved, it reveals much more.

- He speaks about his childhood, and his martyrdom.
- His Greek puzzle helps to confirm his identity,
- demonstrates the accuracy of his statements
- and shows the path by which he joined the followers of Jesus.

I have already introduced Thomas (through whom Stephen spoke) and his wife Olive. We already know how in the beginning Stephen took Thomas unawares. We know a little of the personal history of Thomas, we know how he used to feel while in trance.

What are they like as people? Olive, the New Zealander, is dark, vivacious, much smaller than Thomas, warm and deeply religious. Thomas, the Londoner, looks and behaves like the businessman, or high-class hotelkeeper that he has been. Dresses smartly, a good speaker, and always seems in charge of the situation. He gives little hint of being introspective or a mystic, yet is in fact devoutly spiritual.

Let's visit them in their home, perhaps hoping that Stephen may be willing to communicate. Thomas and Olive are only marginally well off,

but the home has a neat, cheerful feel about it, and we are welcome. The handful of guests is religious, but free thinking. They are perhaps all creative in their various ways, and come from a wide variety of religious backgrounds. Ordinary main-line churchgoers, a Liberal Catholic priest, a Buddhist, and so on.

At first we have refreshments and chat about this and that as people do in almost any group. But then we earnestly discuss the transcripts of recordings of the last conversation with Stephen. From our discussion questions arise. These are more usually put to Stephen by Olive or myself.

The time comes to invite Stephen. There is a period of prayer and meditation. Then Thomas prays for spiritual protection prior to allowing himself to fall into trance. He becomes pale, he is unconscious, then there is a slight jerk in his body and he appears to change before our eyes to become a smiling visitor who nevertheless keeps his eyes shut. Visitor Stephen usually jokes a little before coming down to the serious business.

It was on the day of the marriage of Thomas and Olive. The wedding breakfast was over. It was evening, and the usual people who had been questioning Stephen were assembled to hear from him once more. Perhaps it was that we wanted to include Stephen in the party. Thomas was tired of course, and had just a little too much to drink. Even so Stephen was in no way hindered. He began by uttering a number of Greek words in what turned out to be a less-known dialect of 2000 years ago.

Three of us were later to make a painstaking transcript of them from a tape-recording. Thirty years of detective work with the words have revealed a great deal about Stephen's life, which we were able to back up with hard facts from scholarly and ancient sources. Stephen was able to convey these words through Thomas who knew no Greek, and lead us to information which makes it virtually certain that it is the spirit of Stephen who is speaking, and no other.

62 May 13, 1974 The Greek words

Stephen: Κάρο διότι διέτα διότι, κάρο διότι βορώ ζέλαι Ληναϊκά μέλλα
μέλλα διέστα(sthai?).¹

¹ Κάρω διότι διέτα διότι Κάρω διότι βορώ ζέλαι Ληναϊκά μέλλα
διέστα [διέσθαι]

But it would be better, I think, were I to speak with words that would bring a greater emotive response.

*[In telling the story, I find the enemy to be its bewildering **complexity**. To keep the story simple, I'll leave out the rest of the conversation. Six days were to elapse, during which time attempts were made to translate these words.*

For easier reading I shall continue to present the main story in normal type, and supporting data in small print, just for the record.]

This is what Stephen's words mean, and imply:

My research helps to confirm that Stephen was accurate when he said that his Greek words had originally been spoken to Joseph the father of Jesus, and that Joseph had been an *Essene* at the time.

Stephen would have spoken those words to Joseph, just before he himself was accepted into the same group of Essenes as Joseph, after Stephen had served a two years' probation.

The Essenes had a **Communion** service, with bread and diluted grape-juice, and the initiate was not entitled to take part in that service unless he had had two years' preparation and probation. When finally he was accepted as an Essene, grape-juice was diluted ready for the ceremony.

Stephen said that he had been born in the Ancyra (modern Ankara) area of Galatia, and that his given name, Stenen, was Thracian. As Stephen spoke the dialect of Greek spoken in those days in Thrace (some hundreds of kilometers from Ancyra), and as he refers to himself as a Celt, we can assume that his parents were Celtic and Jewish, and that one or both of them had come to Ancyra from Thrace. It is a fact that there were many Jews and Celts in Ancyra who intermarried.

A number of modern scholars do think that Stephen had been an Essene, before he became a follower of Jesus.

We have to know all the above and more, before we can understand the proper translation, which is:

“For the Carnyx*/Celt [like For the Kiwi/New Zealander], the two years [of the probation] having passed, for this Carnyx, the wine of the juice of the newly-pressed grape of the Lenaia must now be mixed with water [as it always was in the Messianic Communion].**

[*A Celtic war trumpet that Romans and others saw as a symbol of the Celts
 ***The Lenaia were ceremonies celebrating the juice of the newly-pressed grape. They were in honour of the god Dionysus. Stephen would have found it a suitable Greek term to translate the Aramaic names of the Grape juice festival of the Essenes, and to refer to the Communion service in which the diluted grape-juice was the main thing.*]

Later in this part, we shall read Stephen’s own words about his childhood

Discussing the Greek Puzzle with Stephen

§63 May 19, 1974 I check out a first effort at translation with Stephen

[Prior to this session I had done much research into the meaning of Stephen’s Greek words, and now felt ready to come up with a translation. I had noted that the word for **wine (zélai)** was a Thracian word, and mistakenly thought **for the Celtic born** was the right meaning for **kárno**. I had learnt that there had been Celts in Thrace (in the far north of Greece), and also in Galatia, in Asia Minor, and that Celtic tribes had conquered Thrace early in the 3rd cent. BC, that they had proceeded to overrun much of Asia Minor, only later to be confined to Phrygia, which was renamed Galatia, after the Latin for Celts, **Galli**. I had understood that **Lenaiká** referred to the Lenaea, a Dionysian festival; and that the Celts had a bad name for drunkenness. I had *reasoned* that Stephen was not from Thrace, but from Galatia.]

Stephen I believe much study has been apparent these days, since last we have spoken!

Myself: Indeed there has! Stephen, might we check with you the results of our studies? Are you aware of the interpretation of your Greek?

S: I would prefer that you would give me one of these interpretations.

Myself: “And so, for the Gallic[*Celtic*]-born, and for the two-year-old, for the Gallic-born, for the glutton, the Bacchanalian [*Dionysian*] wines should be diluted”.

S. And the conclusions from this interpretation that you came to?

M: The historical conclusion leads me to guess that when you were last on earth - last ‘shackled’ - you were a Greek-speaking Jew, using the Thracian-type dialect, spoken by the native inhabitants of Galatia, and that it was in that province that you spent your childhood.

S: The childhood I spent in Ancyra².

M: Did you?! And now the other conclusion is that the reason why you spoke of “Greater emotive response” [in §62]³ was because the people of Galatia had bad feelings about the Gallic-born [Celts], whom they thought to be rough and uncouth masters - that is why their wine had to be diluted.

S. I would not be so unkind! The emotive response that was required was from you. If I speak in a tongue with which all of you are unfamiliar, then we would not *feel* as we do now.

Your interpretation is close to that of which I intended. The only deep significance was that of an exercise,⁴ firstly that I might test myself. For to

²Modern Ankara.

³ Looking back, I can see that Stephen is saying that meaningless words convey no insights, no feelings at depth.

⁴ I accept that, for Stephen, it seemed thus to him. But in view of the continual expansion in the significance of his words, and continuing synchronicity or meaningful coincidence with them, then Spirit had a wider purpose with these words than had Stephen.

use these words *that have not been with Thomas for many, many generations*,⁵ was an achievement for both Thomas and myself, and excellent practice for you.

M. I was surprised that you were able to use words that Thomas did not know⁶.

S. Might I, at this stage, use then the opportunity to tell you more of Stephen? It has been of concern that it should be one that was known and has been written of, that should come to you in this way.

[The were indeed people in the group, especially in the early stages, who quite reasonably felt most bothered by the fact that we seemed to be receiving communications from such a famous personality.]

S. It is for a simple reason - not that Stephen is great, only that he may be recognised as an *instrument*.

I will give you a comparison of the power - I should say better - the gifts of Stephen, for which he was chosen for the tasks that were to be performed. It was spoken of Stephen that he was often "with spirit". Look then, now, on the body of Thomas. Is it not also "with spirit"? There are many, and there have been many before, through whom the Father has chosen to communicate with many, for his purposes - many at the time when Stephen was chosen for the task. Therefore be sure in your minds that there are many now who could undertake this task, and the tasks that Stephen could undertake. But they gain not their position by their own choosing.

You have this day listened to the words of the teaching that explains to you that when the Father calls, He chooses the instrument, or the priest, or the bishop. It would be better always if we

⁵ §88 implies the relation of Thomas to Joseph

⁶ Stephen is stating that Joseph, the father of Jesus, *had* known those words many generations ago, and that the Thomas of today is very closely related to him in "the Communion of Saints". This is a key point in interpreting the Greek.

understood that Stephen, like Thomas, has been used for a particular purpose of the Father.

The knowledge that may be attributed to Stephen, and to many others, comes from whence all knowledge comes. Your own knowledge - to be able to trace and find out from small clues - is an achievement. Looked at in the physical, and by the physical minds only, it could be said that Michael is extremely clever, for I assure you that, to my knowledge, no living soul could tell you this day where Stephen spent his childhood. But if then, we consider Michael the instrument, who is susceptible to guidance, and is open, then the mystery becomes then again, in proportion.

Should we say that because Thomas's voice speaks a strange language, that Thomas is clever? Instead, we often give the glory to Stephen. This is not so [appropriate], for when you find more of Stephen in the writings, you will find mistakes were made by Stephen in what he taught, for Stephen, like all of us and all of you, can form conclusions that are often incorrect".

Stephen's own moving words about his childhood and youth:

When Stephen joined us on another occasion he said:

S. Olive has a question. She wishes to know more of Stephen. My answer is that she wishes to understand how and why I feel things, why I might say things, and to whom I might speak, what emotions I might have, if I have any anger, and what my doubts might be. Then perhaps she will understand herself better, and she knows another a little closer. She might understand then, when she feels despondent, and feels that much is not worth while, when she sees that another has felt this way, has risen above it, and has gained help, and can give help. Then perhaps it might be that the readers of the book that you would write, might also feel this.

Would you know of the times when Stephen was in doubt? When he walked and preached and still he doubted?

Of the great fear, and the knowledge of tragedy that was in Stephen's heart? Or the tears that Stephen shed for himself? Of the ambitions, as your own, that were unrealised?

Of the terror of death, of the fear of the opinions of others, the ambitions to wealth and fame, of the love of another that Stephen felt? Does this sound unfamiliar to you?

This is how it was for Stephen, a young man, spoken of by his elders. I recall that he was considered untidy, that he showed not the respect for his parents that he might, that he stole as a child foolish things, he gave what did not belong to him, his taste for music was indifferent, he had

many dislikes of the foods that he ate, he would wish for fine horses, but needed to pretend with a mule; he had ambitions of being a great soldier.

We could then count Stephen as failing in many of his ambitions, much to his gain. Stephen did not see success in much that he tried to accomplish. Often his testimony was mistaken. Very seldom was it well received. He had many moments of foolishness, and a great deal of laughter. He was inexperienced when he travelled, and often he was unwise in his companionship. This then is Stephen. Is there more that you wish to know?

Olive: **Your awareness now.**

S. The awareness that I have is the gift of, and is part of the Father, as are we all. We think perhaps that Stephen is separated and that he is aware of everything in the way that Olive might be aware, or feels that she is aware. But this of course is not so. (It is true that) for a long period of what we might call time (after the death of his body) Stephen was separated, as many still are.

In his so-called separateness, Stephen attempted to be of service to the Father. But then in the course of what we call time, Stephen let go of the personality of Stephen, the tent which the Father had given him in which to be housed. And thus unclothed, he gave up his separateness to be one with the Whole. You will understand that when I speak to you, I re-enter this tent, I put on again the clothes of Stephen, I put on the robes of a saint, in order that you may feel comfortable, in order that you may walk with me in a way that to you is familiar.

Myself: It makes me feel really scared to hear you talk like this. That this Stephen to whom we talk is only a puppet of personality manipulated by the whole. It reminds me that I Michael would be such a puppet too. I get really scared of losing what is me, what I think of as me, and jumping into the void.

S. Then take the comfort that the Father has given you; accept the security of your tent. Return to the tent that is Michael when you would wish. It is there for your use. But as for me, I have left my Stephen behind, and I have life that belongs to the Whole, to the Father. Now I can be present in the lives of a thousand others.

§133 Sept. 20 1976 [Stephen's Awareness] S. We are a little out of practice! In what way may I assist?

John: I take it that you are in a time, space, and awareness that is different from ours. How much are you yourself aware of our particular time, space, and consciousness? How much are you aware of what is actually going on in our planet?

S. Firstly, I must disagree with you. You are in a particular time and place with a lack of awareness, and your conscious mind does not always recall.

But your awareness is such that many things, (even though not seen and observed) are apparent to you. You ask of my awareness, of this as a planet. The awareness is of much more, that of a Whole, rather than that of a separate planet.

You too, as you think, are aware of much wider fields than just this planet. You know for certain that this is a part of the universe, and you are aware of the universe. My awareness is not greatly different from yours, except that I do not have some of your restrictions. I do not need to touch, for to know; I do not need to sit, to be aware, I do not need to taste, to be fulfilled, and know what satisfies.

Each of you now - each of you now close your eyes. You are using only some of your senses now, and you are aware not only of what is in this room, but of your vehicles outside, in some cases the families that are at home. You know of a certainty that these things are there. Such is my awareness of what I know exists.

Miriam: Could Stephen tell me what God is then?

S. God is everything that you see, and more. It is all that you cannot imagine, all that you cannot conceive.

That is how I feel, I feel that I am part of that.

S. You must be part of that, for there are many who cannot conceive Miriam, nor perceive Miriam. You are part of that, that cannot be seen, touched or conceived, and much of what we call creation, so that we cannot even separate ourselves in this way. We are also the unknown, as well as the known. Can we conceive of Stephen? Is he known to all? Can we feel and touch him? Nevertheless, we have Stephen here.

Do we have Stephen here separate in the sense that Michael is separate?

S. Separate only because we choose to say that Stephen is separate, for none of us is separate from each other.

On the other hand, within metres of this place there are many people gathered [in a church] who would deny his very existence, and who would not be able even to conceive this Stephen that we have.

I continue to confuse myself, for I say to the group that I can infer that I am part of the Whole, that you are also a part of the Whole, but I can't switch me off.

S. It is [the truth of] your experience of the moment that you are Michael, and I am Stephen.

Why deny what is given to you for experience?

For it is [just as] true as the discussion that would go on with this other group of people, were they to deny the existence of Stephen, for to them Stephen cannot and does not exist.

M. Do you feel "Stephen" or do you feel "The Whole?" Or do you feel a figment of my imagination?

S. For if I speak that I am Stephen, I must first create Stephen, and be he. For I cannot be nothing. For once I decided I was nothingness, then I have learned nothing of nothing. I will say this however for your guidance, and accept this humble advice. Do not feel that you must throw a concept to the winds or feel that things have been taken from you that you know. For as I am real to you now, all those concepts that are real to you, are part of your needs. They are your clothing, they are your life, and they are what supply your needs.

M. Now I think I can take this in. Now I am asking a test question: Are you real to yourself? In the sense that I say this of myself?

S. In the sense that you say this of yourself.

Olive: Do I conjure up my picture of Jesus?

S. Did you conjure up for us Stephen? Olive: No

Then no more did you conjure up for us our Lord, or have I conjured up falsehood. He is real to you and to me. Blessed, holy, real, even so, for he should not be denied. For if you deny when you feel the real gifts, then you deny what is yourself.

Olive: This is where we seem to be tangling ourselves. For in one sense it is easy for me to feel Jesus as you, and John, and to feel him in this way, and in another way we might feel Jesus within, as part of us. Now there is a certain truth there too, but we tangle ourselves.

S. You cannot say that you are Jesus, any more than Thomas can say that he is Stephen, even though the body be of Thomas, and the voice that I call Stephen comes from... but they are not separate, neither are you.

M. A picture I use when talking to people is to use the picture of the fingers of the hand. I say you are the thumb, you are the forefinger and you are the ring finger, but there is one hand. Is that a useful image?

S. Put the hand in a room, and say of all, "You are the room". In one way you restrict your outlook, and in another way you expand it beyond your own comprehension. You have what you need. What you have, what you feel, what you love, is there for your needs.

M. Now this I accept from one angle, but this leaves me still confused because you Stephen, while in Tom, are part of this room; and even when you are not in Tom, you are part of us. Yet you are Stephen, and I am Michael, yet you are part of us. Yet you are Stephen, I am Michael, and Jesus is Jesus. But the room and Jesus together...

S. We need first to put Michael and Stephen together, for Michael has a need for the words that Stephen will say, and the concept that he must give. Therefore, Michael has Stephen. You have Jesus in the same way. You have God in the same way, if you choose. You have yourself in that way.

On his language: S. We often say that the language that Stephen speaks is his language when I do not have a language. For language is but sound and sound needs a throat a tongue and an ear with which to listen. Of these things I have none. Would the gift be of use to us if the language could not be understood and when the words were spoken, there was no emotion felt?

We use our bodies as one might an instrument to catch what we must feel. That the mind that I use, (Thomas's), has a store of

sounds that can be used and understood by the ear, makes the instrument useful, for words by themselves when they are spoken or written separately mean little, but together, (when Stephen speaks), with what is in our hearts, what has been previously in our minds and in our thoughts since we last spoke; these sounds for the ear can reach the heart.”

More on his martyrdom : §38, 23 Oct 1973.

S. After two thousand years you would think that one would give up hope!

M. But I would think.. oh!..I am just thinking of you as being two thousand years old, although I know that this could be said of us all. But you have felt successful sometimes during those two thousand years?

S. Occasionally I have felt that I have been worthy in a small way of doing the work of the Lord. Even then you may have read of my failure.

M. That was very much in my mind at that point. Does the Bible report what happened at the stoning accurately?

S. Quite accurately.

M. You.. What pain.. then.. did you feel?

S. Only for a short time was there pain. The Lord is more merciful than you would imagine. That each one under these circumstance is taken apart from himself. Even now, should injury come to Thomas' body he would not feel that.. I do not suggest that we injure him, for he must come back!

M. Stephen, no questions are coming to my mind.. but feelings are coming into my mind.. to my inner self.. that I think I am getting the Brother feeling.. I cannot put it better into words.

S. This is how the feeling should be, for we are brothers. I shall depart. Continue with your feeling. Feel thus, when you pray. And bless each of you.

Christ speaks:

“The task of your servant Stephen is that of messenger and he speaks with great authority. The task of yourselves is the decision as to which way you chose to use those messages. I say this unto you,

that if your choice be wise, you will indeed see the fire in my eyes. You will indeed recognize the feet that are burnished bronze. Wonder not but proceed with courage, for thus far, we are well pleased”.

...That is a transcription of what was said at conversations with Stephen on himself on successive occasions. **And early on I gave my first faulty translation of Stephen’s Greek words.**

Celts and Jews in Galatia:

With regard to that dialect of Greek, it must be Stephen’s own. People don’t usually mimic the dialect of someone else.

It is a northern version of Koine⁷ Greek, as spoken in Thrace. That’s why I at first connected Stephen with Thrace.

For record, if you know any Greek, you can read in the Appendix a full analysis showing them to be genuinely of Stephen’s time and place, corroborated by experts in ancient Greek.



*Detail from the Gendesrup bowl, Denmark, showing the **blowing of the carnyx, the Celtic trumpet in time of war.***

The word itself is a Celtic loan word, and it does refer to a strange-looking trumpet used in battle. I can defend saying that it also means **Celt**, because Roman coins and triumphal sculptures do show the trumpet or Carnyx to *symbolise* the Celt, the Celt beaten by the Romans in battle. The carnyx was a potent image, because the Celts were known for being aggressive warriors, and it was their musical instrument

.....used for psychological warfare.⁸

⁷The international form of Greek spoken hundreds of years after Classical times, in

The carnyx⁹ was played with the stem pointing vertically upwards, with the round trumpet mouth replaced by a bellowing animal's head, facing forwards. The trumpet looks like a bellowing or talking instrument, or a puppet being manipulated from below. A very good metaphor for the "instrument" that St Stephen would have himself recognised as, and the instrument that Thomas was.

In the dictionary, it is noted that "the carnyx is frequently depicted on Roman coins and monumental sculptures showing victories over the Celts, particularly on Trajan's column, which celebrated the Dacian campaign."

Thus the carnyx was very much a symbol of the Celts.¹⁰ There we have the Carnyx then. So what can this reveal about Stephen? Plainly it connects him to the Celts, and, because his word for **wine** is Thracian, then Stephen must in some way be connected to Thrace.

the first century A.D.

⁸I acknowledge the help of specialists in ancient Greek, Associate Professor Robin Bond of the University of Canterbury, and Dr Paul McKechnie of the University of Auckland. Their comments are noted both in this chapter, and in the Appendix.

Regarding the carnyx, however, another authority expands on our dictionary quotes:

"Although surviving examples are few, there are many depictions of Carnyces, especially on Roman triumphal sculpture and coinage; the legions encountered it in battle, and thought it so strange, **that it was used as an emblem of the tribes they fought**. This gives us a wide range of comparative material, of varying quality. Some factors in the reconstruction are inevitably speculative: the original length and diameter of the tube, for instance, is unknown, although the dimensions fall within the known range. More awkward is the nature of the mouthpiece, for which evidence is poor." *Fraser Hunter, Dept of Archaeology, National Museums of Scotland.* < <http://www.carnyx.mcmail.com/carnyx.htm> > [My emphasis].

⁹ It was not until 1992 that I discovered I had misread the dictionary. It was *Celtic horn (Carnyx)*, not *born*. A few days later it occurred to me to try and find out what a carnyx would look like. Without much hope, I visited the city library and was referred to the "*New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*". On page 312 I found a picture of three carnyx players (in a detail from a Celtic silver cauldron of the 1st or 2nd century BC, found at Gundestrup in Jutland).

I had correctly guessed that name Galatia referred to Gauls or Celts, and guessed that he had lived there, on the misapprehension that there were Christians in Galatia during Stephen's childhood.

Nevertheless, Stephen had confirmed my guess by saying that he was born in Ancyra (modern Ankara). (Even though there had been no Christians there at that time.)

So then, How was it that the Celts came to Thrace and then to Galatia?

From good reference books we can learn that in the third century B.C. certain warrior tribes from Gaul had migrated to the East.

Irruptions of Gallic or Celtic tribes into the eastern parts of Europe are first recorded in 281 BC when a small army under Cambaules, attacked Thrace.¹¹ Three years later their soldiers swept through a large area of northern Asia Minor. After much conflict they were eventually settled in northern Phrygia, which was called "Galatia", after the Roman word "Galli" meaning "Celts".¹²

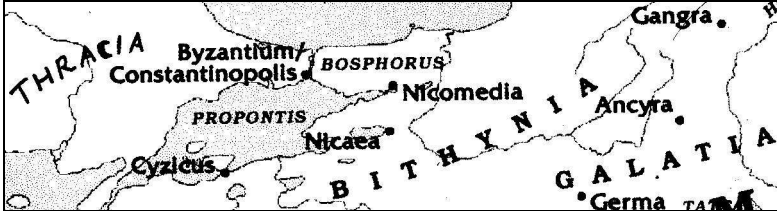
The next word of interest is **boro**, which can mean *for the drunkard*? Would this be appropriate? Would Stephen be implying that he was a "drunken Celt"?

Not necessarily. It is true that Celts *did not* dilute their wine at the time that Stephen was alive, as was customary in the ancient world. Wine cups

¹¹ In 278 three Celtic tribes that had migrated across Europe to the Dardanelles were taken as allies by Nicomedes I of Bithynia. The Celts invaded and ravaged Anatolia until they were defeated by Antiochus in 275. Thereafter they were settled in northern Phrygia by Nicomedes and Mithradates, where they served as a buffer against the Seleucids. The district they occupied was thereafter called Galatia (from Galli, the Latin word for Celts). [Enc. Brit. 2000]

¹² The population in this area consisted of the original Phrygians of the old Anatolia, the invading Celts and settler Greeks, to whom were afterwards added a considerable sprinkling of Romans and a smaller number of Jews. At the time of St Paul and St Stephen there was probably a marked difference between the rural Celtic population of Galatia, who were comparative barbarians, little affected by Greek manners, and the population of the cities, who were Greek, the majority of whom were not of Celtic origin. But while continuing Celts in feeling, the Celtic tribes in AD 30 who had intermarried with the people of the land, must have been assimilated to a large extent into Greek life and culture during the three centuries spent as a conquering cast amid more civilised peoples. [See articles by William M. Ramsay on Galatia, in James Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*]

found are so large that they could not have been used for wine, drunk undiluted. Indeed drinking undiluted wine was frowned upon. When there was a party, the president of the party decided the proportion of water that should be mixed with the wine.



Map showing the Black Sea, Thrace, to the west of the Dardenelles, Galatia, to the east of Bithynia. (*Ancyra cap. of Galatia*).¹³

In fact the Celts had a very bad name with many in the civilised world. They were regarded as barbarous, exceptionally hard drinkers, and most warlike.¹⁴ As I have noted, their braying beast-mouthed battle trumpet, was used as a fitting symbol for them on numbers of ancient Roman coins.

So let's try another translation:

"For this reason, for the Celt, two years having passed, for this reason, for the greedy Celt, the Dionysian wine shall be diluted".

That translation makes some kind of sense in the above context. It was true that the Celts were often a drunken lot. There was speculation at the time that Stephen was having a sly dig at Tom and Olive, who had a lot of wine at their wedding breakfast, that they were behaving like drunken Celts. It is possible that this was the case, (who can tell?), but the provenance of

¹³ From *Murray's Small Classical Atlas* ed G.B. Grundy, 1917

¹⁴ Diodoros is shocked at the exorbitant price "Celts" of his day would pay for a jar or even a cup of wine, attributing it to monumental lust for wine on the part of the barbarians (V.26.3). Diodoros makes no bones about the consequences in Massalia:

"The Gauls are exceedingly addicted to the use of wine and fill themselves with the wine which is brought into their country by merchants, drinking it unmixed, and since they partake of this drink without moderation by reason of their craving for it, when they are drunken they fall into a stupor or a state of madness. Consequently many of the Italian traders, induced by the love of money which characterizes them, believe that the love of wine of these Gauls is their own godsend. For these transport the wine on the navigable rivers by means of boats and through the level plain on wagons, and receive for it an incredible price; for in exchange for a jar of wine they receive a slave, getting a servant in return for the drink" (V.26.3)

these words is plainly that of the ancient world, and we will come back to this issue later on when we have Celtic Stephen in Judaea, in reach of Jerusalem.

Stephen's words do imply that he had some sort of connection with the Celts. But we know that he was also a Jew. So how did the Jews find themselves in Thrace and in Galatia?

The enormous extent of the Jewish Diaspora in comparison with the petty mother country presents an enigma to historical inquiry which it is unable to solve with certainty. At the beginning of the Greek period the rulers sought, in the interests of consolidation of their dominions, to effect the greatest possible intermixture of populations, and with a view to this they incited and favoured general migrations, by guaranteeing certain privileges and by other means.¹⁵

ASIA MINOR. – Here we have numerous testimonies, and are able to demonstrate the presence of Jews in almost every quarter. They were most thickly settled in Phrygia [later *Galatia*] and Lydia, and we know further how they came there. Antiochus the Great transplanted two thousand Jewish families from Mesopotamia and Babylonia to Lydia and Phrygia, because he considered them more loyal subjects than the Lydians and Phrygians.¹⁶

With regard to Thrace, it appears that hard evidence is lacking about Jews there. On complex evidence, the author of the above citations infers that neighbouring Macedonia had a number of Jews. Later he infers that many were descended from prisoners of war of the Maccabaeen period who had been sold into slavery in Greece.

Stephen in Ancyra

Stephen's Greek dialect belongs to Thrace, so his family must have come from there. We can assume that Stephen is calling himself a "Carnyx" or "Celt", and we know that he also saw himself as a Jew, (see Acts 6), and he did say he was born in Ancyra, in Galatia. (Modern Ankara).¹⁷

Possible Celtic ancestors for Stephen would have begun coming to Galatia almost three hundred years previously. It seems however likely that his actual parents were first generation settlers. The reasoning is that Stephen was to say that his real name was Stenen,

¹⁵ E. Schürer "Diaspora" James Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, extra vol p.91 ii

¹⁶ *ibid* p. 93 i

¹⁷ In Galatia, the most general language was Greek. But there were still Phrygian speakers (a language that scholars used to consider to be linked to Thracian or Illyrian but who now view Phrygian as a separate Indo-European language that shares a number of isoglosses with ancient Greek.) No doubt some people understood Latin and Hebrew.

and that it was Thracian. Having a Thracian name, using a Thracian word, implies that his parents had family connections with Thrace, or had come from there. They may have been Jews, or Celts converted to Judaism. On the possibility that one of his parents had been born in Ancyra, then there would also be a good chance of a Babylonian origin.

We picture Jews of all periods of time as being steadfast in asserting their Jewishness. So how likely is it that Stephen as a Jew in Ancyra, would refer to himself as a Celt? In answer, William M. Ramsay¹⁸ writes:

“The Jewish colonists [in North Galatia] undoubtedly exercised great influence on the development of Asia Minor in the Roman period; but they have left few conspicuous traces of their presence. They adopted Greek and Roman names (at least in public life [“Stephen” is a Greek name meaning “Crown”]) and it is doubtful how far they retained any knowledge of Hebrew; hence they are hardly to be distinguished from the ordinary citizens”.

Ramsay states two other important things: namely (1) that Celts were very thinly distributed through Galatia, except in Ancyra where there was a greater concentration of them. There, they constituted an upper class, over the mass of people who were Phrygians and Greeks. (2) Ramsay speculates that several upper class and noble families were Jewish. Thus Ramsay gives persuasive reasons for supposing that Stephen saw himself first as a Celt, and secondly as a Jew, much as Jews in the United States, see themselves primarily as U.S. citizens, and secondarily as Jews. It is likely that Stephen belonged to this putative upper class, if *Acts* is right in recording that he was later chosen by the twelve apostles for his leadership abilities. The speeches credited to him in the book of *Acts*, in themselves, would presuppose that Stephen was literate and that he was obviously a leader.

Not so long after our session with Stephen in which we discussed my first attempt at a translation of his Greek, Thomas was to “receive” concerning the early life of Stephen. As I said earlier, he received with his conscious mind, and this was checked when he was in trance and we were speaking to Stephen.

One day (August 1974) Thomas consciously attuned his mind to Stephen, and attempted to intuit more of his history.

¹⁸ Also in his article on Galatia, In James Hastings’ *Dictionary of the Bible* vol.2, p. 88 ii.

[In giving an account of the resulting intuitions of Thomas, I present just one, or a pair, at a time. I then relate how we attempted to evaluate the intuition(s) in question.]

Thomas: “Stephen... no, that did not seem right..Stenen.. another of us is Stenen.. how strange.”

Later we had a conversation with Stephen to check all this, and I asked him whether “Stenen” was right.

§ September 8, 1974 It would be correct, said Stephen.

(And the origin of the name?) It was a Thracian name and quite common.¹⁹

M. And when did you change it? Was it when you became a Christian?

S. I never did change this name. Others may have changed it for me. For often the name by which we are called did not find favour with those that we must speak to. I believe this would still be common practice.

M. Stalin being an example. ...

S. I am not familiar with the name.

Stalin was the Russian leader of some years ago, who was called Dzhugashvili, and who changed his name to Stalin, the man of Steel.

...

“A Greek-speaking Jew”: wrote Thomas.

...

[Yes, we know this from the Book of Acts, chapter 6. Stephen was appointed to help the apostles so that he could minister to the Greek-speaking widows who had joined the followers of Jesus who were missing out on help, because the apostles were Aramaic speakers.]

¹⁹*The Language of the Thracians*, Ivan Duridanov, has a list of the few Thracian personal names now known. “Stenen” is not in this list. The sound combination “st” is found.

Thomas: “born in the small village of Seletar, on the outskirts of Ancyra in the province of Galatia i.e. near Ankara in what is now modern Turkey”.

Stephen had said Ancyra. But this is not really a contradiction. I phoned Thomas and asked him whether he could say more about Seletar, and after meditating a short time he answered: it was to the NE of Ancyra,²⁰ on the outskirts, a small village, extending along the bank of the river, making the shape of a capital D with the straight side along the bank of the river. On the Seletar side of the river it was reasonably flat, whereas the land on the opposite side of the river is hilly, rocky and barren. The buildings are mainly white, and low, and the streets geometrically laid out, with wider streets running parallel to the river. There are four of these wider streets; but at the wider part of the D, these wider streets parallel to the river were augmented by three of four narrower streets.

The letter D seemed to bother Tom. It was a peculiar shaped D. It was important... perhaps it wasn't a D after all, but a numeral.

I pointed out to Tom that the Greek D (δ) was used to represent the number 4, and so I wondered whether the name Seletar had to do with the number 4.

“Were you born in Seletar?” I asked Stephen later.

S. The name, in spite of the contradiction that might be in your mind is indeed Seletar.

M. And did the name have a meaning?

S. An obscure one I believe: It was “The Fourth Landing-place”. Seletar, does it mean “fourth” in the Thracian dialect?

M. It does, the fourth place.

²⁰Modern Ankara is situated near the confluence of the Hatip, Ince Su and Cubuk streams. The latter flows into Ankara from the Northeast, and has been dammed six miles up stream from Ankara. This may be the river referred to in Thomas' receiving. Ancient Ancyra, is to be identified with Ulus, which is located on two steep hills, and where ancient sites can still be identified, in particular the temple dedicated to Caesar Augustus, the Roman emperor, who died in AD 15, not so long before Stephen would have been born.

Tom said that the place was the NE of Ancyra, along the river, and that the village, which was in the shape of the letter D faced north across the river to the hilly country. Could you confirm that?

S. The village was to the north, and to the east of Ancyra, but was not on the same bank as Ancyra.

[As stated, Seletar would have been on more level ground, whereas on the other side of the river, it was hilly, with (we discover now in 1997) Ancyra or Ulus being built on steep hills.]

[I became a little confused about the picture, and I wondered whether Thomas had made a mistake. To which Stephen replied:].

S. Then we shall forgive him! For even though I was born there, such accuracy has needed much accuracy in recall. Can you describe for me the village in which you were born, the meaning and the name of the village, and its geographical location? Thomas has done so.²¹

[We have spent some time in wondering about the location of this village. Archeological enquiries have not yet been made: whatever the truth, the enquiry does serve to help us visualise Stephen in space as well as time. In general Thomas' not-in-trance receiving checks out with known facts almost as well as in-trance receiving.]

A cross-correspondence with "Stephen"

²¹ I thought I should check the meaning that Stephen gave for the name "Seletar" through Thomas, in trance. Some years later we were to hear of the Seletar in modern Singapore, where Thomas had visited with his RAF platoon for 36 hours on the way to Hong Kong. It gave rise to the question whether it truly is Stephen communicating at this point, or whether the name comes from a subliminal memory of Thomas.

But it is not inconceivable that Seletar means what Stephen said it means: For in Liddell and Scott there is listed the word σηλία "selia" untranslated with reference to an Attic form of the word τηλία meaning "any flat board, tray or table with a raised rim or edge". As the Greek for "four" is "τέσσαρες"=tessares or "τέτταρες"=tettares, I thought that we might not get confirmation for "tar" meaning "fourth". But the writer Amphis in 335 AD uses the root "tar-" = tar- = "four". Anything of course can happen with dialectical forms. "Tar-" could have been used in the Thracian dialect; "board with raised edges" could have acquired an extended meaning, to "landing-stage". There again, it may have that meaning in a local language. Who knows? Stephen's translation is *not* impossible. Nor is it substantiated without doubt.

A member of our group at that time was Michael McG. Michael had not been present at the Stephen-session where we spoke of Tom's spiritual receiving with regard to Stephen's biography, and when Michael McG. spoke to me, he had just received the transcript of the session. It appeared that a week before, just about the time that this information concerning Stephen's life was coming into Tom's mind, that Michael had felt inspired to write a science-fiction story. It was about an extra-terrestrial race of "Thracians", who inhabit a planet on another solar system, whose technical advances are similar to our own, but there was one striking difference, and that was that the Messiah, Jesus Christ, had not made himself known there. The main character of that other world was a man called "Stenen", medium-tall, blue-black hair, steel-blue eyes, and the colour of his eyes was considered a mutation that was unfavourable, and therefore he was an outcast.

We can see the exact parallels: Thracian, Stenen, main character, outcast = stoned. "Colour of eyes unfavourable mutation" could be seen as parallel to Stephen's seeing of the spirit, causing him to be stoned. And we can note the coinciding in time with Tom's receiving.

At a meeting of our group Michael McG.'s writing aroused great interest.

The possibility that Stephen and his parents came to Judaea because they were sympathisers with the Essenes.

Stephen agreed that he was a Galatian. But we know that he was martyred outside Jerusalem. How was it that he travelled to Judaea? We do not of course know. It is possible that Stephen was with his parents on their way to becoming pious settlers in Jerusalem, so that they could be close to the Temple. Foreign Jews often did this so that they could participate in the Temple worship. It is possible that Stephen journeyed to Palestine alone or with other companions. We do not know. But we have a question to consider. Stephen said that those Greek words had been spoken to Joseph the father of Jesus, and, in another context, that Joseph was an *Essene*. (§76) Stephen stated that these words were known to Joseph, so this suggests that he was somehow involved with Joseph and the Essenes. Which kind of Essenes, though? We must remember that Joseph was *married* to Mary: therefore they did not belong to the main body of celibate Essenes at Qumran by the Dead Sea. On the contrary, it is clear from their *Zadokite document* that the married were in Essene "camps" both in towns and villages.²²

²² II.Code for Urban Communities Chs ix-xii III Code for Camp-Communities chs. xii-xiii

Joseph and Mary as Essenes.

I have quoted Stephen as saying that in addition to Joseph and Mary, some of the disciples of Jesus had belonged to the Essenes, and this is also the opinion of a number of New Testament scholars. Kittler pointed out a very interesting thing, that Joseph and Mary then would have belonged to a sect that expected a *Messiah to come from their own midst*. It would not therefore have seemed incredible to Mary, that an angel should announce to her that she would become mother to the Messiah, who in turn was connected with Mary and Joseph, and the Essene community.

At §162 reference is made to the time when Stephen had said that he, Joseph and Mary, and also Judas, belonged to the same spiritual group. At the time I took this to mean, “belong spiritually together”. But perhaps he also meant that they had been all together amongst people who had been connected with the Essenes.²³

The Essenes in general: In his *A history of Christianity*,²⁴ Paul Johnson notes that “Palestine Judaism was not a unitary religion but a collection of sects.. as many as twenty-four.”

“The Essenes did not recognize the Temple.. and they were agreed to be the purest and strictest sects.”

“The Essenes existed for 150 years by the time of Jesus’ birth – they wanted a theocratic state and to purify the Temple – but by going to Qumran (near the Dead Sea) they opened Judaism to universalism by making the physical location less important”

“There arose a new idea that the Temple is not the building, but the worshippers”

“The Essenes...developed the regular practice of a sacral meal of bread and wine...” [*It has been termed a “Messianic Feast service”*]

“The Essenes were incredibly intolerant. They had a war plan and were an extremist apocalyptic-eschatological²⁵ sect, who expected their triumph to come soon”

“The individual is nothing; the pure community (and a community of birth and race) is all.”

²³ Stephen says that Joseph and Mary were Essenes at §88

²⁴ (1976) [pages 14-19]

²⁵ “revelation of hidden things” “dealing with the events of the last times of the world when the saving Messiah will be revealed”

There is some information to begin with. They were the “purest and strictest of sects”, “incredibly intolerant”, and exclusive. But there is much more of interest.

My Thesis

Stephen’s said that these Greek words in the Thracian dialect were known to Joseph, the father of Jesus, and that Joseph was as Essene. In view of Stephen’s Thracian Celtic origins, and the fact that he said that he had been a member of the same group as Joseph and Mary, it is almost certain that it was he who had uttered those words to Joseph as he was about to be admitted to the Essenes, to their Messianic Feast, after serving a two-year novitiate. Full fellowship conferred the privilege of sharing “board”, (literally “drink”) with the priests and rabbis²⁶.

Quite early in our conversations with Stephen, I asked him whether I had been present at the time of our Lord, and he said Yes. He said that he and others had been members of a (presumably reincarnational)group at that time, and at §27 we have: “*Michael*: I would like to ask you, Who are in my group? Can you tell me that?

Stephen: I for one, Mary for another, Joseph for another, a relatively small number, but then we are discussing a group in physical terms [for which I am the memory]”

Thus, if we accept the accuracy of Stephen’s words, then (1) Joseph and Mary were Essenes (2) Stephen implies that he and the version of myself alive at that time were also Essenes. (3) As the words are in Stephen’s own dialect, and as he *was* an Essene, then it is reasonably certain that it was he who spoke those Greek words to Joseph, prior to being received into their particular Essene group.

If this is true, then we can come at the right translation.. **The key is the word *boro/βορῶ***. Prof. Bond, whose help I have acknowledged earlier, has pointed out that it has a **second meaning, namely, “with the juice of the freshly pressed grape”**.

Let’s try another translation: “For the Celt, wherefore, two years having passed, mark you, for the Celt, with the juice of the freshly pressed grape the Lenaïa [*a Dionysian festival of the newly pressed grape, in fact*] wine shall be diluted.”

²⁶ Qumran *Manual of Discipline* vi,13-23 “Of postulants and novices”

But *why should grape-juice be diluted for the Celt*”? They were such odd words. And especially odd, it would appear, if spoken to Jewish Essene Joseph. Plainly one cannot get drunk on grape-juice, so there is no need for dilution. Moreover what had the grape-juice of the Lenaïa to do with Joseph and the Essenes?

It was in 1995 that I was thinking about this grape-juice, also called “must”, and had the conundrum on my mind when a friend decided to lend me Glenn D. Kittler’s: *Edgar Cayce on the Dead Sea Scrolls* in a Swedish translation printed in 1978. Kittler’s preface helped me connect “Lenaïka [pertaining to the Lenaïa] and the must” with “Essenes”.

The link was **the Essenes’ expectation of a Messiah with their Messianic Feast (like a Communion service)**: Firstly, as stated, Kittler pointed out that the Essenes expected to produce a Messiah from their own number, that one of their women members would be mother to the Messiah or *Christ*.²⁷

Then Kittler describes the Essene Messianic Feast: [and I translate back into English]:

[Page 110] So it is quite clear that the Essenes expected to find **a Messiah from amongst their own number**. Moreover they were expecting a Messiah to come very soon. It was clear that they expected that he would be a layman, a royal Messiah, a worldly leader, and of the house of David. This is quite evident in their Manual of Discipline - namely in the part that deals with rituals at mealtimes. It is always the priest who blesses the bread and **the must** [or grape juice, new wine, (which we have been associating with the Lenaïa) which the priest **dilutes**], and who first partakes. Even with a Messianic feast, even in the presence of the Messiah, it was still the priest who pronounced the blessing, and who first partook of the bread and must. Only then was the Messiah served and the others.²⁸

²⁷ “Messiah” is Aramaic, “Christ” is Greek, and means “The Anointed One.” Later, Christians were to confine the word “Messiah” to Jesus Christ, the Saviour. But before his birth, the Essenes could envisage a number of Messiahs, or “Christ”s.

²⁸ Fitzmyer at p.73 quotes from Appendix A of the Qumran *Manual of Discipline* 1QSa 2:11-22:

[Then shall be the as]sembly of the men of renown [summoned] to the meeting of the council of the community, when/if [God] begets the Messiah among them. There shall enter [the priest], the head of the whole congregation of Israel, and all [his]bro[thers, the sons of Aaron, the priests [summoned] to the meeting of men of renown. They shall sit be[fore him, each [according to his dignity. Afterwards there sh[all take his seat the Mes]siah of Israel. And the head[s of] the Th[ousands of Israel] shall sit

Stephen is quoting Greek words spoken to Aramaic speaking Joseph (who may well have been familiar with Greek. He has to find a Greek word for the ceremony involving grape juice. The Lenaia with its grape juice is a close parallel. The best term, surely. And it would apply also to the annual Festival of the Grape Juice of the Essenes. (They had three main feasts, each separated by a "Pentecost" of fifty days, and one of these feasts was the feast of the **New Wine, or Must**. Truly, New Wine was an idea central to the Essenes. Joseph in his language would have used the words "yayin hadash" or "mô'ed hattîrôs"²⁹.

before him, [ea]ch according to his dignity. And [when they] meet together [at tab]le [or to drink the ne]w wine and (when) the table is *prepared and [the new wine] is [mixed] for drinking*, [no]one shall [stretch forth] his hand to the first-fruits of the bread and [the new wine] before the priest; for [he it is who shall bl]ess the first-fruits of the bread and the new win[e and he shall stretch forth] his hand to the bread first. Afterwa[rd] the Messiah of Israel [will stre]tch for his hand to the bread. [And then] all the congregation of the community [shall ut]ter a blessing, ea[ch according to] his dignity. According to this regulation [they] shall act at every meal-prepar[ation when] at least ten me[n are ga]thered.

²⁹ Joseph A.Fitzmyer: *Responses to 101 Questions on the Dead Sea Scrolls*: London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992 (p.74) "mention is made of tîrôsh, "must, fresh wine" He implies that the "new wine" may be taken as meaning "must".

(p.75) 'In 11QTemple the Feast of New Wine (19:14) mentions yayin hadash, lit. "new wine," but later on it is called mô'ed hattîrôs, "Feast of Must" (43:8-9)

The use of this calendar is also confirmed by the regulations for the sacrifices given in the Feast-Day Calendar of 11QTemple 13:8-30:2, according to which we learn that the community also celebrated feasts not recognized by other Jews. [p.86]

'What is striking here is the celebration of three Pentecosts: the Pentecost of Wheat, the Pentecost of Wine, and the Pentecost of Oil each clearly marked as "fifty days" from the preceding feast, beginning with the Sheaf Waving or First Fruits of Barley. Pentekoste is the Greek name for the "fiftieth" day, which the LXX of Tob 2:1 describes as "the sacred (festival) of the Seven Weeks." Its post biblical Aramaic name was 'asarta ', or in Greek Asartha, as used by Josephus (Ant. 3.10.6 § 252), which means "(the feast of) the Gathering" or "Assembly." It was to be fifty days from Passover, but reckoned according to Lev 23:15-16, "from the morrow after the sabbath (mim-mohorat hassabbat), from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven full weeks shall they be, counting fifty days to the morrow of the seventh sabbath." [pages 86-87]

This brings us back to a study of our translation of Stephen's Greek words, i.e. "*For this reason, for the Carnyx/Celtic trumpet/Celt, two years having passed, for the Carnyx,(mark you) with the juice of the freshly pressed grape, (as in the Dionysian Lenaia festival) the wine of the Messianic Feast shall be diluted.*"

As I have noted, Professor Bond had pointed out that **borós** could both mean "drunkard" or "**juice of pressed grapes, or must**". He suggested "Again, in the spirit of oracular/mystic utterances, a pun ambiguity may be intended". It is truly ambiguous: on the one hand, it is a fact that the Celts were seen as drunkards; and **borô /glutton** would be rubbing this in. On the other hand (still with likely uncomplimentary overtones with regard to the Celts) it does most likely refer to the juice of pressed grapes present at the scene when the words were spoken. In the *latter* case **borô/grape juice** would fit in nicely with the two words that follow: "**Zélai Lenaiká/new wine of the Essene Messianic Feast.**"

Now we can make a translation that makes much better sense:

"For this reason, for the Celt, two years [of the Novitiate - see below] having passed, for this reason, for the Celt, with the juice of the pressed grape, the new wine of the Messianic Feast [seen as parallel to the Lenaia] shall be diluted"

. [Strange that he used a Thracian word in this context. Perhaps it was so natural for him that he was unaware that "zélai"/"wine" would not be understood. Perhaps he knew Joseph well, and had used the word before in his presence.]

Stephen as a novice, and acceptance as an Essene

When Stephen was speaking of his youth, he mentioned that he was fourteen years old, when Jesus was crucified. That would be one year after Stephen would by custom have become a religious adult. But children and teenagers could never be classed as Essenes. If Stephen had wished to join the Essenes, he could have begun a novitiate at the age of eighteen and be accepted at the age of twenty.

"At the age of twenty years (he shall be) enrolled" (*Rule of the Congregation* 1, 8-9, 1QSa) and only "at the age of twenty-five years he may take his place among the foundations (i.e. the officials) of the holy

congregation to work in the service of the congregation” (ibid., 1, 12-13). In addition, “No boy or woman shall enter their camps, from the time they march out of Jerusalem to war until they return” (*War Rule* VII, 3-4).³⁰

I have taken Stephen’s Greek words as implying that he would have just completed a “novitiate” of two years [**two years having passed**] and that he had been accepted as a full member of the Essenes. Nothing else makes sense of the “two years”.

To join the Essenes Stephen would have had to spend two years as a novice.

We learn about being such a novice in the Qumran *Manual of Discipline* vi,13-23, as summarised by A.R.C. Leaney and others³¹:

“A novice had to spend a year of probation, before he was publicly examined. If he passed the test he was allowed to live within the community and to share food with those members who belonged to the lower orders of the group. After another probationary period and passing a second test, he could then join the community as a full member, and at last was allowed to share food³² with even those members called *rabbim* who constituted a ‘council of elders’. Their standing was the highest in the group, and from them were chosen three priests and twelve lay members in whose hands was the supreme administration of the group.³³”

³⁰ Cf. Y. Yadin, *The Scroll of War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 71. It stands to reason that this prohibition stems from the fear of sexual attraction toward women and even children. Cf. Ibid., pp. 290-91.

³¹ Leaney, R.P.C. Hanson, J. Posen: *A Guide to the Scrolls SCM*, 1958 p.44

³² Heb. Original is “drink”. This agrees with Stephen’s Greek words implying “*now that the novitiate is over, let the unfermented wine be mixed.*”]

³³ “Of postulants and novices” vi,13-23 : If any man in Israel wish to be affiliated to the formal congregation of the community, the superintendent of the general membership is to examine him as to his intelligence and his actions and, if he then embark on a course of training, he is to have him enter into a covenant to return to the truth and turn away from all perversity. Then he is to apprise him of all the rules of the community. §Subsequently, when that man comes to present himself to the general membership, everyone is to be asked his opinion about him, and his admission to or rejection from the formal congregation of the community is to be determined by general vote. §No candidate, however, is to be admitted to the formal state of purity enjoyed by the general membership of the community until, at the completion of a full year, his spiritual attitude and his performance have been duly reviewed. Meanwhile he is to have no stake in the common funds. §After he has spent a full year in the midst of the community, the members are jointly to review his case, as to his understanding

This sharing of food or drink implies taking part in the Essene Messianic Feast with the *rabbim* and the priests.

We can now try yet another translation:

“Therefore, for the Celt, now that the two years [of the novitiate] have passed, for the Celt (mark you) with the juice of pressed grapes, let’s dilute the **new wine of the Messianic Feast** [with water]”

In that context, the translation makes perfect sense.³⁴

The village community that Stephen would have joined

If Stephen were in fact joining with Joseph and Mary, he would have been joining a village community. It may be of interest to learn about such communities.

Magen Broshi in his paper *Village Essenes* writes:

For a village Essene matters were less rigid but many requirements were the same as those for the monastic order. Both branches: considered themselves the true Israel; followed the Zadokite priesthood—every group of ten or more had to include a priest; partook of a common meal; arranged themselves in a strict hierarchy; insisted on a correct interpretation and strict adherence to the Laws of Moses; swore to uphold the New Covenant; followed a solar calendar precisely so as not to deviate from his appointed times, including holding an annual congregation.

and performance in matters of doctrine. If it then be voted by the opinion of the priest and the majority of their co-covenanters to admit him to the sodality, they are to have him bring with him all his property and the tools of his profession. . . .§Not until the completion of a second year among the members of the community is the candidate to be admitted to the common board [Hebr. “drink”] When, however, the second year has been completed, he is to be subjected to a further review by the general membership, and if it then be voted to admit him to the community, he is to be registered in the due order of rank which he is to occupy among his brethren in all matters pertaining to doctrine, judicial procedure, degree of purity and share in the common funds. Thenceforth his counsel and judgment are to be at the disposal of the community.” *The Scriptures of the Dead Sea Sect in English Translation*. Translation, Introduction and Notes by Theodore H. Gaster. 1957. pp. 60-61

³⁴ We cannot say *in what place* these words were spoken. Consider again the points made in the footnote before the last.

The children of any Jew (those who had entered the covenant granted to all Israel forever) could become an Essene by swearing an oath on their reaching twenty—the age of enrolment. Before then nothing of the statutes was to be revealed to them. Particular rules for village Essenes were given in the Damascus Rule and the Rule of the Congregation, or the Messianic Rule as Vermes has renamed it.

Members had to cleave to the laws of Moses; the Mebaqqer of the camp or village community was its head, its teacher and its director; he allowed commerce with the impure and the imperfect but had absolute power over it, permitting no casual contacts; temple sacrifice was permitted and demanded absolute ritual purity; full maturity was reached according to the Rule of the Congregation only at the age of 30; observance of the sabbath was strict, the rule expressly forbidding the picking and eating of fruits from the fields; members were not allowed to bear witness in the courts of the gentiles—the Romans. The punishment was death but since the Community had no powers of capital punishment it is plain that expulsion was meant. Expulsion was eternal death, but for a strict Essene was often physical death too.

Note that village Essenes brought up in an Essene community were not considered mature until the age of thirty, the age at which Jesus was baptized. No Jewish priest was allowed to enter office until he was thirty years old and the Essenes were a priestly sect.

Village Essenes, unlike the monastic variety, owned their own property. Instead of holding goods in common they donated two days' wages a month into a common fund to provide for orphans, the old and needy and widows. The Community whether in the monastery or the camp was bonded by a common meal. Only the perfect were allowed to partake of it and in particular to partake of the "new wine" which is to say the unfermented grape juice of the congregation.³⁵

This completes our investigation of the puzzling Greek words that Stephen originally spoke through the mouth of Thomas Ashman. A careful reader might rightly complain that there is speculation here. We cannot check with Stephen and ask "Did you mean this or that?" "Were they

³⁵ Magen Broshi, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

actually your words to Joseph?” “Were the words actually spoken in the context we suspect?” Unless we could ask such words, we cannot have certainty. On the other hand, the words are correct grammar, and *can* bear the meaning we ascribe to them, and they *do* fit if we believe Stephen when he says they were known to Essene Joseph.

Why were these words so memorable?

If in fact Stephen is quoting words that he himself said to Joseph they will have been words of huge emotional impact, they would have been truly unforgettable. Here is Greek-speaking Stephen with mixed Celtic-Jewish ancestry actually gaining acceptance and membership with a group of Essenes in Judaea, in spite of their racism, and their despising of foreign born Jews. He is gaining acceptance after a two year initiation. He is saying it to the father of Jesus, the Jesus in whose cause, Stephen is to be martyred. Truly unforgettable indeed.

STEPHEN’S MINISTRY and MARTYRDOM

Stephen’s Greek fits one situation only: that he was about to be received as a full member of the Essenes. We know the rules that governed the lives of Essene communities. If the Essene community to which Stephen belonged kept to these rules, then we have quite a clear impression of the religious structure in which he would have lived.

If we can agree that Stephen’s Greek words were repeating what he had said to Joseph almost 2000 years ago, then it seems that he was joining Village Essenes, perhaps at the earliest age possible, the age of twenty. Stephen said he was fourteen years old when Jesus was crucified. Five years later, at the age of nineteen, he said he began to “receive” and become aware of Divine guidance. We might guess that his family had migrated to Palestine, and that perhaps they had become village Essenes themselves. Scholars do paint differing pictures of the Essenes. The possibility has been raised that they were like our contemporary Catholic Church, with monasteries and convents, and its priesthood, its communion service, but also with its ordinary members. If Stephen had Essene parents, he could have recognised the crucified Jesus as the Messiah, without ceasing to be a practising Essene. After all the apostles in Jerusalem continued in their own form of Judaism, and continued in worship at the Temple. Stephen could have been martyred for his faith in the Risen Christ, while still being an

Essene. It is indeed true that members of Essene group had rules of strict obedience to the leader, but perhaps Stephen had sufficient learning, and spiritual authority to be given his head. Essenes were human and probably different from community to community in their practices. We may recall that Stephen said that he was nearly twenty-two years old when he was martyred.

Let us now discuss what St. Luke has to say about Stephen:

Luke writes in *Acts 6.1* that “some time later” after the coming of the Holy Spirit (was this months or even years?) there was a quarrel between Greek-speaking and native Jews about the care of Greek widows. Luke says that the apostles after due process selected Stephen and six others for this work. Stephen was no newcomer, but, as he himself implies, he was personally known to the father of the Messiah. (The confusing thing however, is that there is no mention of Stephen working for the widows. It is clear that he is an evangelist, doing what the apostles do.)

From St Luke’s *Acts of the Apostles*, Chapter 6, it is clear that Stephen has accepted Jesus as the Messiah and Saviour. Whether or not he had broken with the Essenes, we do not know, but he is described as an evangelist for the risen Christ, preaching with great power. There are hints in the *Acts* story though, that he was a leader of a group of followers of Christ who were not in agreement with the rest of the Jerusalem Christians, who continued worshipping in the temple like all other Jews.³⁶ *Acts 11.19-21* seems to imply that he was a leader of a group of evangelists³⁷. He seems to have been opposed to the church of the Judaeans Christians in Jerusalem, headed by James, the brother of Jesus, Peter and John. Paul makes no reference to Stephen, in his own writings. We may guess that Stephen had

³⁶These are words said to have been spoken by Stephen shortly before he was stoned :*Acts 7.47-50* “However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men: as the prophet says, “Heaven is my throne and earth my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord; where is my resting –place? Are not all these things of my own making?.” . . . These sentiments would be in line with Essene belief.

³⁷Meanwhile those who had been scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen made their way to Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, bringing the message to the Jews and to no others. But there were some natives of Cyprus and Cyrene among them, and these, when they arrived at Antioch, began to speak to Gentiles as well, telling them the good news of the Lord Jesus.

his own version of the Gospel, tinged with an Essenism modified by a thorough universalism. As a Hellenistic Jew, brought up in a land far distant from Israel, it would be hard for him to have had a too parochial God.

===MORE NOW FROM STEPHEN HIMSELF===

The group of us who met regularly to hear and question Stephen, had been focusing on his earthly life. Thomas Ashman, in private meditation intuited the statements printed in larger type. For convenience I present each of Thomas' intuitions interspersed with the comments that Stephen made at a later date.

“Stephen knew from his receivings that Jesus was the Messiah.”

Stephen replied: I am aware of the questions that you would ask. In general, the details of “Stenen” (Stephen) would be correct, although the importance of these details is slight. The intention of Thomas, I feel sure, was that, as with himself and others, others of us could associate a little and know a little. The book you write is not a biography of those associated together. The book is to convey to others what we have come to know so that they may examine this knowledge also. But pray, do clarify in your mind the other details, for by now I feel that these details will have aroused much curiosity.

Indeed they have!

S. I perceive Thomas to say that he would wish it.

Thomas: “He travelled to and joined the Christians at Sardis”.

[If his starting point were Ancyra, then it is a fact that there was a good main road between Ancyra and Sardis on the West Coast of Asia Minor.]

“His receivings became known at the nearby church of Thyatira [a day's journey from Sardis by the direct route north] where the disciple Joseph known as Barnabas or “son of a prophet” taught on several occasions.”

These last two statements cannot be confirmed from Scripture, but are possibly accurate for three reasons:

- (a) New Testament chronologies are constructed from particular dates that are reasonably well accepted, nevertheless there is controversy. I have already discussed C.H. Turner's choice of dates, namely: The crucifixion of Jesus AD 29 or 30; and Paul's conversion AD 35 or 36. These dates agree with Stephen's words, that he was 14 when Jesus was crucified, say, in AD 29).

- (b) I have presented reasons for thinking that Stephen turned from the Essenes to be the follower of Jesus, after the resurrection. But he may have he stayed an Essene, yet believed Jesus to be the Messiah. Stephen agrees that he became “an active receiver at the age of 19”, presumably meaning that he became an active receiver of personal revelation. Presumably this marked the beginning of his capacity for inspired preaching. In short, Stephen had perhaps three years in which to preach, either in or near Jerusalem, or in Asia Minor. He would have used the Greek language, abroad, and perhaps without reference to the Jerusalem church.
- (c) Joseph Barnabas, is mentioned in Acts 4.36-7. Like Stephen, he is a Greek-speaker, and was nicknamed “Son of Exhortation” or more accurately “Son of the Prophet” or “the Prophetic One” by the apostles. Shortly after the Pentecost, the occasion of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, he sold an estate and gave the money to the apostles. We know that after Paul’s conversion, he preached the gospel both together with him, and separately. He seemed from the first to have formed a high opinion of Paul’s ability and energy, and it was he who sought him out in Antioch (*Acts* 11.25), and seems to have formed a special friendship with him. The two lived in close fellowship with the congregation in Antioch for two years. Such being the “prophetic one”, it is not at all impossible that he could have been in Thyatira prior to Paul’s conversion.

The receiving seems to say that Stephen had preached or prophesied in Sardis, and his prophecies became known in Thyatira, where Barnabas also preached. I have already noted S.G.F. Brandon’s view, supported by words in *Acts* 11 that Stephen was actually leading a movement of his own, and had fellow evangelists who continued their work after Stephen’s death.

Earlier I recalled how Stephen has said that he had been in his fifteenth year when Jesus was crucified. From the book of *Acts* we do get the impression that Stephen could have been stoned to death perhaps even in the same year that Jesus was crucified, perhaps 29 or 30 AD, and this for instance is how the scholar Harnack took it. But if Stephen had in fact been accepted as an Essene at the age of 20, that date would be impossible.

Other inconsistencies are found in *Acts* (vii.54-60). There we are told that Saul, later called Paul, watched the stoning of Stephen, and even held the cloaks of those doing the stoning. Further, the *Acts* story suggests that the example that Stephen gave in dying, would be in Saul’s mind at least after his vision of Christ on the road to Damascus. If we were to accept the Bible picture we might imagine that the crucifixion, stoning, and Paul’s conversion all happened in the same year.

Other Biblical scholars, on the other hand, namely Ramsay and Lightfoot, put Stephen's death at 33 or 34 AD. Even this theory does not square with Stephen's words, for he would still only be 18 or 19 at the time of his death.

Another scholar, C.H. Turner, who wrote in the five volume *Hastings Dictionary of the Bible*, put the crucifixion at 29 AD, and Stephen's martyrdom and Paul's conversion at 36 AD. This would make Stephen aged 21, at his death.

Stephen's own words, in reply to my questioning, were consistent with this dating. At the same time he said a most surprising thing.

Myself: "When was Paul converted?³⁸ When you were 21?" - a backhanded way of asking Stephen when he had died. I think I couldn't quite bring myself to refer to his martyrdom directly.

S.I was not present at Paul's conversion.

M.Your dreadful day had occurred... when? Were you 21 on the day that you died?

S. I was late in my 21st year, and soon it would have been my 22nd; I believe four days separated that occurrence from the date that I would celebrate my birth. The timing was considerably bad!

The conversion of Paul, and I understand your meaning of conversion, on the road to Damascus, would precede my 22nd birthday by several months, fifteen in all.

M. It is said that Paul was much influenced by what led up to your own witness for the Lord; but I would understand you to say that he had been spoken to by our Lord before your own witness.

S. I would indeed, be sure of this. It is not to my knowledge, and I have doubt in my mind, that Paul did have any association with the events prior to the celebration of my birthday. You see, Michael, I refuse to die!

...The Bible story in *Acts* is so definite that Paul was consenting in Stephen's murder, and had not yet seen the vision of Christ on the road to

³⁸ Not a good question: the Acts story has Paul's conversion some time after Stephen's martyrdom.

would also differentiate him from Paul, who regarded the law as good, but having no saving power. It could characterise him as an Essene.)

Similarly, Luke has the contradictory story, on the one hand that Stephen was appointed by the Apostles for social work amongst Greek speaking widows, but on the other that Stephen “full of grace and power, began to work great miracles”. Luke says that Stephen argued for the faith against other Hellenistic Jews who “could not hold their own against the inspired wisdom with which he spoke.” (6.10)

Following clues given by Luke, S.G.F. Brandon writes:

“It would consequently appear that the movement of which Stephen was the most notable champion was one which was distinctly separate from that of the original community and its followers, and was even distinguished by a certain amount of hostility to Jewish Christianity, with its continuing attachment to the national cultus. What was the exact significance of the new movement it is impossible to determine on the evidence available, but it should be noted that Paul in all his disputes with the Jewish Christians, so far as they have been recorded in his extant writings, never once invokes the example of Stephen in support of his own cause.”⁴¹

SCHOLARS' THOUGHTS ON STEPHEN AS AN ESSENE

I have found on the Internet an interesting paper by the Rev. Peter J. Blackburn where he discusses the likelihood of Stephen being an Essene. He draws on the work of a number of notable scholars⁴². Amongst the points raised, is the fact that Stephen's speech about the spiritual history of Israel as recorded in *Acts 7*, is very similar to a history in *Hebrews 11*.

“The feature of Stephen's speech and of Heb. 11. . . is their eschatological progression. The examples of hard-heartedness move forward to a signal example of faith in the faith of Christ who is in fact the author and finisher of faith. This eschatological [*having to do with the Second Coming*] note is in keeping with the Qumran [*Essene*] literature, though in Qumran exegesis historical significance seems to be lost in eschatological fulfilment. In Heb. 11 they are kept together.”

⁴¹ op.cit. p.89 See also most recently C.K. Barrett: *The historicity of Acts. Journal of Theological Studies* 50 (1999) 515-34

⁴² O. Cullmann, “The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity” in K. Stendahl (ed.), *op. cit.*; Cullmann, “A New Approach to the Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel”, *ET*, LXXI, 1 and 2; C. Spicq, “L'Épître aux Hébreux, Apollos, Jean-Baptiste, les Hellénistes et Qumrân,” *RQ*, 1, 3 (Feb. 1959), pp. 365-390. A similar line is followed by S.E. Johnson in K. Stendahl, *op. cit.*; Wm. Manson, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1951), pp. 30-36 *et al.*, sees direct dependence between Stephen's message and the doctrine developed in Hebrews. M. Simon, *St. Stephen and the Hellenists in the Primitive Church* (Longmans)

Compare words of Paul Johnson that I quoted earlier ““The Essenes were incredibly intolerant. They were an extremist apocalyptic-eschatological⁴³ sect, who expected their triumph to come soon”. These parallels suggest that Stephen could have had Essene connections.

Johnson once more: “The Essenes did not recognize the Temple.. and they were agreed to be the purest and strictest sects.”

Blackburn writes: “The relation between the Fourth Gospel and the Hellenists is seen in the spiritual approach to worship in the discourse with the Samaritan woman (Jn 4.20-24). This is parallel to the attitude of Stephen, . . . Cullmann considers that Stephen asserts that the construction of the Temple was the height of Israel’s resistance to the divine law (Acts 7.47ff).”Another similarity of Stephen to the Essenes.

And a further one would be universalism. Johnson again: “by going to Qumran (near the Dead Sea) they opened Judaism to universalism by making the physical location less important”. See *Acts* 7.49: “Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will you build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?”

Many other points are made, but suffice it to say that numbers of scholars see a possible connection between Stephen and the Essenes. Scholarship supports rather than otherwise, what our own evidence shows, that Stephen had been an Essene.

The reasoning of these scholars assumes that Acts 7 gives an accurate picture of what Stephen thought, of what he is reported as saying before his martyrdom. It may do so, but in the absence of stenographers, Luke, the author of *Acts*, must have been reconstructing a speech which he believed would have been in line with his understanding of Stephen’s thinking. As previously suggested, there seems to be some agreement amongst scholars, that sometimes Luke is accurate, and that sometimes his writing is fictional - the story of St Paul being present at Stephen’s martyrdom being an instance.

Our primary interest of course is the revelation of Spirit that has been coming through the Stephen experience. Our research into Stephen’s Greek words has uncovered many mutually confirming facts, giving us glimpses into Stephen’s earthly life. We have also shown how detective work of scholars into matters relating to Stephen’s life, has produced a picture consistent with our own.

HOW IT MAY HAVE BEEN WITH THE HOLY FAMILY

Joseph and Mary, and the brothers of Jesus

Joseph. Stephen’s words that he had said were “known” to Joseph were in Greek. This would indicate that Joseph, an Aramaic speaker, was no simple carpenter, but an educated person. The tone of these words might imply that Joseph was well aware of the reputation in Asia Minor of the Celts. His world was by no

⁴³ “revelation of hidden things” “dealing with the events of the last times of the world when the saving Messiah will be revealed”

means confined to his village, but through his Greek, would have a much wider world. The words imply at least that Joseph and Mary were members of a small Essene village. No doubt he, amongst others, had the power to say yes or no, to Stephen becoming an Essene.

To say that Joseph was a carpenter (“τέκτων”/ “a craftsman in wood”), has no bearing on whether or not he had standing, and was well educated. We can note that the second son of Joseph and Mary, James, had sufficient Greek to write the *Epistle of James*, retained in the New Testament. James was at least bilingual, an accomplished writer, and the ability to lead the Christian church, after the crucifixion of Jesus. If James had this education, surely the first born, Jesus, plainly also with leadership ability, would have been similarly educated, and bilingual.⁴⁴

St Paul was a tent-maker, and of course was highly educated. Everyone in those days had to earn a living somehow.

What about Jesus then? Did he simply explode on the world like a supernova, or did he have an Essenic grounding at the hands of his parents, as well as others? With what education behind him, did Jesus converse with the learned people in the temple, at the age of twelve?⁴⁵

Think of other great religious leaders, such as Martin Luther. As a Catholic monk, he had tremendous education. From that basis, he emerged as a reformer who changed the face of much of Europe. So our thesis here, is that Joseph and Mary were parents of standing and education, amongst the Essenes, and it was from the starting point of their upbringing that Jesus developed into a reformer, a Messiah, bearing witness to the universal love of the Father.

⁴⁴ A scholarly correspondent had these comments to make: "The flight into Egypt is important. Many Jews lived in Egypt, most of them in Alexandria. For refugees, Alexandria is a more likely destination than somewhere up country. Therefore Joseph, Mary and Jesus probably lived in Alexandria, though no one knows for how long – and if they knew no Greek before, I bet they learned some there. That is why I distrust New Testament scholars who insist that Jesus can't have known Greek. In Alexandria, even Synagogue services were in Greek. Jesus and his parents, for my money, must have been at least functional Greek speakers. Mary was of a priestly family (Zechariah, Elizabeth) and Joseph was of the Davidic royal family. Jesus sent out his disciples "to teach" –therefore he was himself a teacher, and a teacher of teachers ie of high intellectual attainments in a society with a long and complex literate tradition. I'd say he came from a literate, as well as observant, household. The recent book on this is Richard J. Baucham *Jesus and the relatives of Jesus in the early church.*"

⁴⁵ *Luke 2.46-7 AV:* And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

Education in the Holy Family, yes. And strife also. Edward H. Sugden⁴⁶ gives a succinct summary of what is known of the Holy Family:

Joseph was a “just man” (Mt.1.19), i.e. a strict observer of the Law; the names of his children are those of the forefather of his race, and of three of the patriarchs; and they were doubtless brought up in the atmosphere of rigorous Judaism. Along with Mary they regarded the early ministry of Jesus with suspicion and sought to restrain him (Mt. 12.47 Mk.3.20-33). They did not believe in him (Jn.7.5), and therefore cannot have been amongst his apostles. Hence on the cross Jesus committed the care of his mother, not to them, but to the apostle John (Jn.19.26). After his resurrection our Lord appeared to James (1Cor.15.7), and this resulted in his conversion; so that he and his brothers immediately associated themselves with the apostles (Acts1.14). [James’] character and his relationship to our Lord secured for him the leadership of the church in Jerusalem.... There can be little hesitation in claiming him as the ...author [of the Epistle of James]

The scriptural passages that Sugden cites state that Jesus’ brothers, and presumably Joseph, remained committed to the old beliefs, until after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

I have noted that Mary initially withheld recognition of Jesus as Messiah. *The Gospel According to St. John* depicts her later, apparently accepting him, at the Wedding at Cana⁴⁷. As an Essene, she could indeed accept the possibility of giving birth to a Messiah. And the story of the Annunciation, her vision of the angel, may be true. Perhaps it was that the ministry of Jesus did not conform to the messianic beliefs of the Essenes that made it initially impossible for her to accept his Messiahship. If we accept that Gospel’s testimony that Mary⁴⁸ and John the beloved disciple were at the foot of the cross, we still notice the absence of her other children, and her husband Joseph. We notice that Jesus is concerned for her welfare, and asks John to treat Mary as his mother, and John to be seen as her son. It would appear that Joseph and Jesus’ siblings have cast Mary out of the family.

⁴⁶ “James”, p.1327, col.ii *The Abingdon Bible Commentary*, 1929

⁴⁷ *John* 2.1

⁴⁸ Jesus’ mother is not present in *Mt. 27.55*, *Mk.15.40*, *Lk. 23.49* amongst those present at the crucifixion. In *Jn* 19.25 his mother, his mother’s sister and John are present. There is always scholarly controversy as to which parts of the synoptic gospels (*Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke*) and *John* are historical. *Matthew* and *Luke* are dependent on *Mark*. *John* is independent, but written still later, possibly containing memories of the apostle John. There seems to be some consensus that where *John* differs from the synoptics, he may sometimes present a historical fact. In short all gospels agree about the absence of Joseph and the brothers of Jesus at the crucifixion. *John* alone places her there. Whichever the case, the truth still seems to be that Jesus was rejected by his own family.

The Essene communities were so strict and exclusive, that this is how they would behave. And it must have been a great grief to Jesus, to be rejected also.

If, as Stephen says, he was fourteen when Jesus was crucified, he may have turned to the risen Christ as the Messiah about the same time as the brothers of Jesus, after the appearance of Jesus to James. It may have been later. The first language of Jesus and James was Aramaic, whereas it was Greek with Stephen. Jesus and James were born in Palestine, Stephen in Galatia. Later I shall quote authorities that consider Stephen was very much his own person, and had an understanding of Christ, which differed from the early Christians native to Jerusalem.

(As I pointed out earlier, Scripture is silent as to Joseph. My scenarios demand that he was alive one year before the crucifixion and perhaps several years afterwards. When he died, we do not know.)

Part Six:

FURTHER STUDY ON STEPHEN'S GREEK IN PART 2: and HOW MUCH DOES IT PROVE?

I want to warmly thank two specialists in ancient Greek, whom I have asked to check my translations of the Greek, and to comment on some of the connections I have made to the historical and cultural background:

Associate Professor of Classics at the University of Canterbury N.Z., **Dr. Robin P. Bond** basically accepted the translations, agreed about the origin of anomalous dialectical word-endings, and for the sections of Part Two that I had asked if he would study, accepted at least some of my reasoning. It was very helpful that he drew my attention to a second meaning to βροτός, “juice of pressed grapes”.

I needed checking, since I only have knowledge of New Testament Greek, and the Greek of certain early Christian Fathers. I am neither qualified in classical Greek, or in dialectical. Neither am I a specialist in the history of Asia Minor.

With regard to the eight different words in the Greek, anyone who knows basic Koine Greek (which theological students often learn) can look them up in Liddell and Scott's Greek-English lexicon, note the varying possible translations, and can verify the simple grammar.

Dr Paul McKechnie, Lecturer in Greek at the University of Auckland kindly read most of Part Two. He understandably thought the Greek

strange, but didn't challenge the translations or the word endings. He specifically said that he saw no reason to doubt the integrity either of myself or of Thomas Ashman, the channel. As he had not read the entire book, he could not come to conclusions about the reality of the identity of Stephen, or the reliability of statements attributed to him. Thus he could not have an opinion about my reasoning and speculation on the basis of the ancient texts. All the same, I have to thank him for helping me develop certain lines of thought.

The Greek words that we are studying:

This is what Stephen said in what we believe to be the Koiné Greek as spoken in Thrace, as well as other northern states.:

Κάρνω διότι διέτα διότι Κάρνω διότι βορῶ ζέλαι Ληνηκὰ μέλλα διέστα [διέσθαι]

If the words had been spoken by an inhabitant of Athens, in the south, some of the endings would have been different. They are underlined in the Attic version. Furthermore the word ζέλαι would not have been used.

(a) Attic Greek:

Κάρνω διότι διέτει διότι Κάρνω διότι βορῶ [ζέλαι] Ληναϊκὰ μέλλη διέστα [διέσθαι]

Expressing this is our letters:

(a) *Stephen:* Kárno dióti, diéta dióti, Kárno dióti, borô zélai Leneká mélla diésta

(b) *Attic:* Kárno dióti, diétei dióti, Kárno dióti, borô zélai Lenaiká mélle diésthai

What kind of Greek is this? 1: One of those words is not in fact Greek. The word for **wine/zelai** is a Thracian word. The existence of this word is attested to by Greek grammarian Choerobos, of the 6th cent. B.C. (This language has close genetic links with Latvian and Lithuanian). Thrace lay to the north of Greece, its territory next to Macedonia, and overlapping with modern Bulgaria. Thracian was never a written language, and so anyone using that word must almost certainly have lived in Thrace, or been connected to people who had lived there.

2: I had transliterated the words with great care from the tape recording. Two other persons checked with me, who heard the sounds as I did. In this case the long “ô” sound at the end of one word, was pronounced with a quick up and down inflection, indicated by the **circumflex** (^) over the letter. A few days after Stephen uttered the words, a Greek scholar told me

that the inflection was important: for that is what they did with that “ ô “ in Stephen’s day.⁴⁹ A century later, she said, people simply put a stress on the “ ô “. So that places the words as not later than the first century A.D.⁵⁰

3: Some word **endings** were unusual, and I could not explain the discrepancies. I have been angry with myself for not consulting an advanced classical Greek grammar until 1997. If I had done so immediately I would not have had to live through more than twenty years of uncertainty. But eventually I consulted William W. Goodwin’s *A Greek Grammar*, ed. 1894. From this Grammar I learned several important things: that Attic Greek (known as the Common Dialect) was the educated version spoken in all Greek-speaking lands. But in each area local words crept in, and there were local vowel changes. Compare the Greek above (a) as we transliterated it, with (b) the same words in Attic. The small variations are underlined.⁵¹ $\alpha=a$ substituted for $\eta=e$ and $\alpha=a$ for $\epsilon i=ei$, is a mark of the versions of Koine Greek in the provinces surrounding Thrace, that of Thessaly in the north of Greece; of the Aeolic dialect spoken in the island of Lesbos, and in which in turn had similarities with that of Macedonia.. So it should not be surprising to find these same vowel changes in a supposed northern version of the “Common Dialect” in Thrace.

Ληνεκᾶ instead of Ληνοῖκᾶ on the other hand, can reasonably be attributed to lazy speech. It takes some effort to pronounce the **ai**. (This may or may not have been characteristic of the dialect).

Thus we have one indication that we have to do with the Greek spoken in northern states, one pointing in particular to Thrace, and one that may possibly point to a period no later than the first century A.D.

⁴⁹ See *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. M.Cary et al. Clarendon 1949, p.735

⁵⁰ Dr McKechnie remarks “I don’t think your Greek scholar was right. See W.S. Allen *Vox Graecia* [3rd ed. 1987] where it is stated that a stress accent instead of tonal accentuation came in the 4th/3rd centuries BC.” [But on a Home Page advertising Allen’s book, his views are termed “controversial”.] Even if W.Stanley Allen is right, this may not apply to dialects other than the Attic. It is the nature of dialects to be different, and for older forms to persist away from the culture’s centre. On the other hand, supposing the view is correct, that the change occurred in the 1st cent. AD, such is the nature of dialects, we cannot be absolutely sure of the habit in Thrace. So unfortunately here, we are dealing with a likely possibility, but not proof.

⁵¹ Prof. Bond points out that variations are common even in classical Greek. Doric vowels are found in the lyrics of Attic tragedies, for example.

THE ATTIC or ATHENS VERSION PARSED

Κάρνω dative neut. 2nd decl., of τὸ Κάρνον, v. Hesychius. (The word itself is Celtic, declined as in Greek.) At first wrongly translated “Celtic born” or “Celt”. Many years later it was discovered that the proper translation should have been “Celtic horn, or trumpet”. (As it is a symbol for the Celts, “Celtic horn” can also mean “Celt”. It appears on Roman coins celebrating victories over the Celts) The word is related to κάρνυξ masc. (v. Diodorus Siculus, *Historicus*) whence the English “Carnyx” referring to this same Celtic horn. Within the context of the whole sentence, Carnyx must be read as a symbol for the Celt.

διότι, because, for the reason that, wherefore, since

διέτει dative m. f. or n. of διέτης meaning “of, or lasting two years, a period of two years.” Grammatically, it is the “Dative of Contact, defining a point in time or space.” Therefore I suggest the translation “at two years”, “two years having passed”, “a period of two years completed”.

Βορῶ, dat. m. f. or n. sing. Parallel with Κάρνω, or in apposition to ζέλαι Αηνοϊκά. From βορός, gluttonous, devouring v. Aristophanes *Pax* 38, *or* juice of pressed grapes v. Hesychii Alexandrii *Lexicon*

Ζέλαι (*The lexicon gives this word as neuter. Our parsing seems to show that Stephen is treating the word as feminine. As it is a foreign word, perhaps the gender was not fixed.*) Thracian for οἶνος (wine). Choerobos in his *Grammaticus* ed. Gainsford (from about 590 BCE) p.124 assumes a nom. Ζέλας gen. Ζέλᾱ but the fragment he quotes shows that it was indeclinable, cf Hesychius et Photius. V. ζίλαι, ζείλα. Expansion of Liddell and Scott’s *Greek Lexicon* 1869. Ζέλαι was what we heard, so we stick with it, treating it as if it were the nom. fem. sing. thus allowing **Αηνοϊκά** [pronounced by Stephen “Lehneka”] to be parsed as the nom. sing. fem. adjective Αηνοϊκός ᾶ-όν, “of, or belonging to the Lenaia, an Athenian festival held in the month Αηνοιον” (otherwise known as Gamelion) in honour of Αηνοαίός, the god of the wine-press, ie Dionysus or Bacchus. Gamelion was January, “the wine was just made and the presses (ληνοῖ just cleaned up.” “At these new Tragedies and Comedies

were performed, and a prize of the rich must was given.” (Liddell and Scott, 1869, under Dionusia.)

Μέλλη is the 3rd person singular subjunctive of μέλλω “shall” thus agreeing with the above parsing of ζέλαι Ληναϊκά

The context seems to require that “διέστα” should read “διέσθαι”, the present infinitive of διΐημι, a verb that has several meanings: “1. Drive, thrust or pass through, give people a passage through 2. dismiss, disband. 3 soak, 4 dilute, mix”¹ There could be several reasons for the need for the emendation of the suffix: that is a dialectical form I don’t understand, that the sounds on the tape were a little indistinct, or that, as is usual in most speech, it was not quite clearly articulated. But there is little doubt that it is a version of διΐημι

A further note on Ζέλαι: In *The Language of the Thracians*, Ivan Duridanov states that the natives of Thrace were not literate in their own language. **Only 23 of their words** are attested in ancient writers, of which “zelai” is one. There are a further 180 words reconstructed from modern Bulgarian place names and words. “It turned out that the Thracian language is in close genetic links with the Baltic languages [For more details see my work: *Thrakisch-dakische Studien, I. Teil, Balkansko ezikoznanie, XIII, 2, Sofia, 1969*].”

HOW MUCH DOES THE GREEK PROVE?

1. Firstly, it is most unfortunate that I did not keep the original tape. I was not aware how highly significant it would become.
2. But there are **reasons for us to suppose that we did record the words accurately:** (a) Now that we have fully understood them after all these years, we find they make perfect sense in the context indicated by Stephen. (b) Greek is a highly complex language, with just over 330 forms to a verb conjugation, 36 cases for the adjective, 14 for the noun. In light of this it is remarkable that the words are grammatically correct. One ending wrong, and the sentence would be suspect. (c) Not only meaningful, and correct, the sentence has a common theme, namely “wine”. Historically “wine” is associated with the Celt, βροός can either mean “drunken” or “unfermented wine”, Ληναϊκός is associated with Dionysis or Bacchus, the god

of wine, and refers to a festival of unfermented wine; Ζέλαι means “wine”, δῖημι is the word you use for mixing the wine. (d) Another indication that I transcribed accurately, are the “wrong” endings in διέτα and μέλλα. It is plain that had I misheard, or had I deceived myself into thinking that I had heard the “right” endings and then changed them, I would have destroyed important evidence. It was only 23 years later in 1997 that I discovered that the “wrong” endings were actually correct for Stephen’s dialect. (e) From the study of the historical and cultural background presented in Chapter Two, we find all the data fits together in a perfect jigsaw puzzle.

3. True sceptics will be driven to accuse someone here of constructing a hoax. Against that hypothesis, (a) I can repeat that Thomas Ashman left school at sixteen, and has no education in Greek. (b) The jigsaw only fits together, if the original framer of those words had access to all the information I have uncovered painfully slowly over a period of twenty-five years. Neither Thomas nor I had access to that information in 1974. (c) Moreover whoever the original framer of the sentence was, he knew the word Ζέλαι. This word is only known because it appears in a manuscript glossary of Hesychius, in the 4th cent. AD. Otherwise Thracian was not a written language. A person using it would have had to have come from ancient Thrace, as the sentence implies. (d) If on the other hand, I am accused of knowing everything from the beginning, then reference to my articles published in *The Journal of the Academy of Religion and Psychic Research*, April 1982, and *The Christian Parapsychologist*, June 1981, will give an inkling of the slow development of my solving the mystery, and the great number of discoveries yet to be made. (e) Supposing one alleges that Thomas “found” this quote somewhere: the argument against that is, firstly, that Ζέλαι does not occur in ancient Greek literature, thus it cannot become part of such a quote. Secondly, as I have shown, the quote appears to be part of the specific historical situation outlined in this book. Thirdly, are we to suppose that Thomas went to a huge amount of effort to find such an obscure quotation, say it almost by the way, without any assurance that I could translate it, and make sure that everything fitted together in the intricate way I have

described, over the several years of communicating? Much of the Stephen story would have had to be constructed over those years, with a view to interlocking with those words, and also with what is now known to modern scholars.

4. My sceptical publisher was concerned that there be no possibility of hoax. Prior to reading Part Two, Dr McKechnie, did raise the possibility of a hoax. But not afterwards. He wrote that he saw no reason not to believe in the integrity of the people involved.

Positively: (a) This study shows the Greek words to be genuinely belonging to the first century AD, and not to have come from the mind of Thomas Ashman. He received it “paranormally” (b) In my original laying out of my thesis about the Greek words, I noted that Stephen “said that he and others had been members of a (presumably reincarnating) group at that time. At §27 we have: “*Michael:* I would like to ask you, Who are in my group? Can you tell me that?”

Stephen: I for one, Anne for another, Jacob for another, a relatively small number, but then we are discussing a group in physical terms [for which I am the memory]”

Stephen had already said that Anne and Jacob had been Essenes, that I had been present at the time of Jesus.. and he was now saying Judas was of the same group. All were Essenes then. The Greek was in Stephen’s own dialect, therefore it must be reasonable certain that the Greek words were Stephen’s. We have also noted that many modern scholars who also believe that Stephen was an Essene.

